

# Clare Mount Specialist Sports College

## School Evaluation Form (SEF)

2026-2027



# SELF EVALUATION FRAMEWORK (SEF):

Date: December 2025

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**Parent Voice: What makes Clare Mount exceptional?**

**A healthy balance of understanding and supporting differences across the student body alongside a “can do” attitude. It’s this balance that enables my child to strive for excellence within the context of his diagnosis.** Parent Comment, 2025.

“I was reading the updated admissions policy, last night, and I just wanted to say how clear and concise it is. I think it is really useful to let parents and carers know exactly the sort of children who will thrive at Clare Mount. Equally, it was refreshing to read who wouldn’t be suited to the school. It is a minefield for SEND parents and I feel other schools would really benefit from similar policies.

I was also looking at the some of the numbers, on roll, at other local secondary schools (mainstream). Parents and carers may not realise that Clare Mount isn’t much smaller than some local high schools.

Clare Mount is an outstanding school in every way (my opinion as well as the view of Ofsted). I am an avid believer in the system working from the top down. If SLT lead by example, the rest naturally flows.

Thank you for all you and the team do. There is a touch of magic at Clare Mount that I have never felt anywhere else”. Parent comment, 2026.

“We never forget how fortunate we are to have our daughter at Clare Mount, and we truly appreciate all the wonderful initiatives the school implements to ensure she has a positive and enriching experience. Emails like yours from her form tutor reinforce just how caring and proactive the school (and you as a form teacher) is, and these check-ins mean so much not only to her but to us as her parents as well”  
Parent Feedback on pastoral care, 2026.

“I think this is a wonderful opportunity for our children and one that some parents couldn’t give their children. You are expanding their opportunities some of which we could never believe our children could possibly do. Thank you so much for your investment in it children”.  
Parent Feedback on proposed Ski Trip, 2026.

## Pupil Voice: What is it like to be a pupil at this school?

Pupil voice is encouraged and valued at Clare Mount. The School Council have driven improvements such as naming the Houses (2023-24), improving the outside spaces (24-25) and championing more gym equipment and creating Mental Health posters to be displayed around school (25-26).

Our Advanced NAS Accreditation recognized that pupils are **“supported to express their views, feelings and access activities independently”** (p.57). April 2024.

Pupils play an active role in assemblies with our belief that such events should be ‘for pupils, by pupils’. They are the ‘leaders of tomorrow’ and will often lead tours for visitors and help with interviews of staff. After listening to our pupils speak as part of the LA SEND Partnership Review (2024-2025), Tracy Stephen Interim Assistant Director: Children’s Safeguarding, Wirral Children’s Services, described our pupils as **‘remarkable’** and said **“I want to join your school. You’ve made it sound amazing”**.

The School Council are representative of the school population and have been elected by their peers. In response to being asked this question on the 13<sup>th</sup> January 2026, they responded as follows:

- “I am proud to be a pupil at Clare Mount” (JF).
- “The support you get is really good. The staff have helped me a lot especially early on when I first joined Clare Mount” (EW).
- “The teachers are really friendly which allows pupils to have a good time here” (JM).
- “Staff listen really well. We get a great range of opportunities” (FC).
- “We are always learning new stuff. Teachers are a great help” (TT).

Pupils regularly provide feedback on the well-being through various Bounce Together surveys:

A pupil check-in survey as part of Children’s Mental Health Week, February 2025, revealed (105 responses from pupils in Year 9+):

- Q3 – Felt afraid – 61.9% not at all like me, 19.1% only a little like me (81%).
- Q21 – Felt alone – 53.4% not at all like me, 19.4% only a little like me (72.8%).
- Q35 – People at my school care about me: 23.3% very much, 27.2% quite a lot, 20.4% sometimes (70.9%).
- Q36 – Feel supported by people in school: 28.2% very much, 22.3% quite a lot, 22.3% sometimes (72.8%).
- Q37 – Feel safe – 31.1% very much, 21.4% quite a lot, 20.4% sometimes (72.9%).
- Q38 – Belong – 22.3% very much, 20.4% quite a lot, 26.2% sometimes (68.9%).

Similar surveys will be repeated each year, with Bounce Together surveys forming the basis of our action research.

**School Context****Students**

Any specific features of the student population, particularly those who are disadvantaged, those with SEND, those who are known (or previously known) to children's social care, and those who may face other barriers to their learning. Also include any specific features of the student population on entry - particularly the range of ability.

**Details:****SEND profile:**

**National context:** With Government planning to publish a White Paper in Spring 2026, it is clear that the SEND system across the UK is 'broken' (ISOS, 2024) and requires 'immediate action to rescue it' (ASCL, 2026).

**Local context:**

Wirral has recently published a Special Educational Needs and Disability and Alternative Provision Strategy 2025-2029. This details plans to improve services, provisions and outcomes for children with SEND. This strategy starts from a challenging place given funding deficits (as for most Councils around SEND) and priority improvements that were identified in Wirral's 2025 Local Area SEND Inspection including in EHCPs, communication, services and preparation for adulthood. It is worth noting that (1) Wirral has more special school places than any other Local Authority in the UK, and (2) the selective education landscape can impact on approaches to inclusion.

**School context:**

Clare Mount is an over-subscribed secondary special school. The school has **grown dramatically** in the last 4 years from 248 (last Ofsted, Nov 2021) to over **461 pupils** (School PAN 410), and is now the largest secondary special school of its kind. This has coincided with a move to a new building. **74.1%** of school population have **ASC** as a primary need, **24.3%** MLD and **71.5%** (330) are **boys**.

Clare Mount has agreed with the LA that the school will ideally accommodate 80 pupils in each Year group from Year 7 to 11 (400 pupils plus a 6<sup>th</sup> form for pupils who have attended Clare Mount). The school is, however, being put under increasing pressure from tribunals, and strongly advocates the recommendations of the ISOS Partnership Report (July 2024) in addressing the challenges facing the SEND landscape.

Discussions with the LA have been on-going for the last 2 years about managing numbers. Having already lost a sensory room to accommodate an extra classroom due to increased demand for places through tribunals in 2024/5, it was agreed in a meeting with the Director of Education (November 2025) that the school would accept no more than 60 pupils in Year 7 for 2026-27 in the initial consultation. School has clarified our offer in our admissions and eligibility policy, with pupils needing to have an EHCP, and ASC or MLD as their primary need to gain a place.

School has also put out a training offer to other schools to promote Inclusive Practice and suggested to the LA a Wirral Inclusive Schools Partnership (part of an LA SEND Consultation) or creating another Clare Mount. This approach compliments the recent government announcement (January 2026) that it is investing £200 million over the course of this parliament in SEND training for all teachers and introducing a new expectation that staff in every nursery, school and college should receive training on SEND and inclusion.

**Disadvantaged and those known to Social Care:**

In terms of disadvantaged pupils, Clare Mount is based in one of the most deprived wards of Wirral. Whilst pupils come from all over Wirral to attend Clare Mount, **63%** of pupils are eligible for **Pupil Premium** (compared to a national average of 25.7% based on Free School Meals, DfE June 2025). Clare Mount currently has **3** pupils in **Child Protection** with a small proportion of others (9) known to social care.

**19** pupils are **Children Looked After** (CLA), including 3 from out-of-borough, which is high compared with other schools (2025 data shows an average in England is 2 CLAs per 300 pupils).

**Student population on entry – range of ability:**

- There are 340 pupils with a 'score' at KS2 - in years 7-10.
- Year 11 pupils do not have a score due to the pandemic.
- This means the vast majority of pupils will be counted in any progress 8 figure going forward.
- Out of the 340 pupils **only 13%** who join us in year 7 are '**secondary school ready**'.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>50%</b> of this 340 cohort were working at <b>KS1</b> when they joined.</li> <li>• There is not a significant gap in attainment between our PP and non-PP pupils. In fact, PP pupils have recently out-performed their peers.</li> <li>• Based on the current Y7--10s, <b>girls who join us in year 7 do so with a considerable attainment gap compared to boys</b> (lower). Our recent data, shows that there continues to a boy/girl attainment gap at the end of KS4 (although small numbers remain a factor).</li> </ul>
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<p><b>Staff</b> Any specific features of the staffing of the school. For example, recruitment, turnover/stability, part-timers, non-specialists, experience, absence/extent of supply cover.</p>	<p><b>Staffing expertise and Learning Culture:</b> Mrs Webster, Head for the last 11 years, retired in December 2025. Mr Keefe, has been appointed Headteacher from January 2026, offering the school continuity and a smooth transition, having worked at Clare Mount over two spells for 11 years. Mrs Mault, previously SENCO and Assistant Head, has been appointed Deputy Head Pastoral and Community with responsibility for Inclusion. The other members of the core SLT – Mr Byrne, Deputy Head Academic and Curriculum and Mrs Neill, Assistant Head Behaviour, are extremely experienced and inspirational. All members of core SLT have their NPQH qualification. To match the growth of the school, an extended Senior Leadership Team includes Head of P16 (JR), Head of Upper School (SSt), Head of Lower School (LGr) and Exams Officer (NN). SSt has his NPQH and LGr is starting hers. Mr Keefe and Mrs Mault are completing PhDs through Liverpool John Moores University demonstrating our drive to shape and develop new learning and best practice around SEND. Showing our commitment to developing Collaborative Learning Cultures, Mr Byrne (completed) and Mrs Neill (active) are also involved in Flourish a programme of support for and a growing community of educators interested in creating cultures in which others can flourish without fear (Leeds Beckett University). See case study. All staff are also encouraged to complete a 1-page Action Research project through their performance management which helps to measure impact in 1 aspect of the Well Schools framework, and gives staff experience of leading a project and measuring impact. <b>Staffing retention and growth:</b> Staff retention is excellent with staff sharing a common moral purpose and sense of belonging. Clare Mount has recruited appropriately to match the growth in numbers in recent years. We are committed to a successful formula of keeping class sizes small and retaining sensory/movement spaces in with 37 new staff appointed since September 2024. Staff have received a full induction programme and lesson observations, and feedback from parents' evenings, demonstrate the quality of our recruitment. <b>Absence:</b> We currently have 2 staff on maternity leave (Autumn-Spring), and only 2 Teaching Assistants on long term sickness.</p>
<p><b>Other features</b> Any other features which affect your school but which are largely outside your control. Include any changes since the previous inspection and details of (and responses to) any recent tensions in, or pressures from, the community</p>	<p><b>Building:</b> The building at Clare Mount is Pfl owned. The contract on Wirral runs until 2031, however, due to the Clare Mount building being 'mouth-balled' for 5 years following the closure of Kingsway Academy, the LA are confident of 'carving' the building out of this agreement by Summer 2026. Plans are in place for (1) additional car / mini-bus park spaces and (2) a £300k community café offering work experience in the Summer holidays. During the Spring Term 2026, a £1.3 million 3G pitch has approval to be built with adjustments to the changing rooms, and a £10k bike storage shed at the front of school. Neighbours are supportive of these developments, however, both school and the local residents want to see better access to the school with signage updated, and parking created on the verge outside school allowing for 2-way flow of traffic. Looking further ahead, a link 1-way road through Leasowe Recreation Centre has been discussed.</p>

Evaluation Area	Self-Assessment Grade	Justification
Safeguarding	Met	<p>Clare Mount has an effective, whole-school approach to safeguarding as demonstrated by having clear processes and procedures for reporting concerns through CPOMS. Staff are encouraged to be 'curiosity champions' and asked to adopt trauma-informed practice in creating an 'open and positive safeguarding culture that puts pupils' interests first'.</p> <p>We are compliant with Safeguarding training with all staff subject to Level 1 training every 2 years (next due September 2026), and staff receive an annual KCSIE (Keeping Children Safe in Education) update. We have a designated safeguarding Governor and all SLT, including the DSL and Deputy DSL, are up-to-date with Level 2 training and Safer Recruitment, as appropriate.</p> <p>The Single Central Record is kept up-to-date by our Business Manager and Safeguarding polices regularly reviewed with guidance and collaboration with the Wirral Safeguarding Children Partnership and their Education Officer.</p> <p>Posters are displayed around school, including in reception, so pupils and parents are aware of who they should report concerns to.</p> <p>School has established relationships with multi-agencies working closely with the Wirral Integrated Front Door (Ifd) to provide Daily Lived Experiences (DLEs) and provide reports around attendance, progress and parental engagement. In instances of 'children missing education' our DSL, Learning Mentors and Attendance team work with multi-agencies (e.g. key workers, social workers, counsellors, police) to ensure regular checks/contact are undertaken to try to support the family/child to return to school.</p> <p>We host a SWIS (Social Worker in Schools) and Community Support Police Officer on given days who offer regular advice and support to staff relating to any ongoing cases or concerns. Our Community Support Police Officer has led assemblies / talks on online safety, knife crime and being safe on Bonfire night. School has also worked with the Safer Schools Co-ordinator and Merseyside Police to host an Operation Prospect assembly (December 2025) to over 50 of our most vulnerable pupils in the community to make them aware of the dangers of exploitation (including Prevent). Operation Encompass provides school with reports of any Domestic Violence so school can support individuals as appropriate. In relation to child-on-child violence and sexual harassment, school work closely with Brook to organise age appropriate workshops on an annual basis with Health Services in Schools also based in school for half a day a week to talk to pupils individually and in groups in a range of topics.</p> <p>Online safety in school is monitored effectively using Smoothwall. This is further promoted through the Curriculum and Online Safety Week, and parents/carers are encouraged to use apps like Qustodio to monitor the online activity of their child beyond school.</p> <p>Governors form a Health, Safety and Welfare Committee including the Head, Mr Stanley (our Health &amp; Safety Lead) and Mrs Egan, Business Manager. They undertake regular audits and Health &amp; Safety Compliance checklists. Through this process, and accessing Health &amp; Safety training from Safe School and Jean Fairbrother Associates, school has kept up to date with legislation, including recently installing a new front gate/fence (December 2025) to ensure we are compliant with Martyn's Law. A new tannoy system will help to further improve the efficiency of our lockdown drills. Pupil and staff emergency plans have been created. School is always looking at ways to get even better and is in the process of introducing Tootoot to empower pupil voice with leading safeguarding software, providing a confidential route for pupils to report bullying and abuse should it occur.</p>

<p><b>Inclusion</b></p>	<p>Exceptional</p>	<p>The following overview shows a school that has ‘inclusion’ in its vision, mission and core values. We not only develop and grow best practice in our own school but advocate it across a range of networks. Further information can be found on our website and in reports to Governors.</p> <p><b>SEND:</b> All pupils at Clare Mount have an EHCP and a statement of Special Educational Need. From a SEND perspective, we have a clear, aspirational vision that all our pupils see themselves as ‘role models and catalysts for change’ in how their special needs are perceived by the wider community. This ‘I can’ mentality together with our commitment to small class sizes and sensory environments has been the formula for our success and the foundation behind why places at the school are so in demand. Relationships are key, and pupils’ profiles and EHCPs are reviewed on an annual basis (if not more regularly as needs change as part of a continuous cycle). The appointment of Mrs Price as our Annual Review lead, and Mrs Wilson as a LA SENDSTART caseworker with specific responsibility for Clare Mount since 2024, has enhanced this process dramatically. Inclusion has always been at the heart of our decision-making. We have been an Inclusion Lead School for the Youth Sport Trust for over 15 years advocating the benefits of S.T.E.P. and the Inclusion Spectrum as simply good practice for all. As such, we have protected 1-day a week for Mr White, our Inclusion Lead, to work across Merseyside and further a-field, including delivering workshops in Italy, Germany and Slovenia as a Development Coach promoting Inclusion 2024 <a href="https://education.activityalliance.org.uk/">https://education.activityalliance.org.uk/</a> and more recently the DfE-funded Inclusion 2028 programme that will improve access to PE and school sports for pupils with SEND <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/news/improved-pe-and-sport-for-more-than-240000-pupils-with-send">https://www.gov.uk/government/news/improved-pe-and-sport-for-more-than-240000-pupils-with-send</a></p> <p>Through this valuable work, Clare Mount has helped create various training programmes such as All About Autism, All About Me, promoting inclusive practice to thousands of colleagues as an online resource. <a href="https://www.youthsporttrust.org/all-about-autism">https://www.youthsporttrust.org/all-about-autism</a></p> <p>In 2025, Clare Mount achieved Beacon status from the National Autistic Society – 1 of only 10 services at the time to achieve this accolade across the UK. Subsequently we have offered training around autism to schools across the North West. Despite becoming a ‘Beacon’ ourselves, we have continued to access training to continually improve our own practice. This has included an INSET on ‘sensory processing’ through Julia Dyer (September 2025) <a href="http://www.juliadyer.com">www.juliadyer.com</a> which led to us appointing ‘ASC/Sensory Champions’ in every Dept/Faculty (November 2025) who will lead on developing the ‘A SECRET’ sensory integration framework after further training in January 2026.</p> <p>In terms of meeting other SEND needs, Clare Mount houses the Wirral Sensory Service team who offer advice, guidance and training on pupils with hearing and visual impairments.</p> <p>With regards to ADHD, Colin Foley from Neurodiversity Training UK, formerly with the ADHD Foundation, delivered an inspiring workshop at our MOVE WELL Conference in November on returns in February to deliver through training to pupils, parents and staff <a href="https://neurodiversitytraining.uk">https://neurodiversitytraining.uk</a>. In considering the new Ofsted Framework, our new Deputy Head Pastoral Mrs Mault will retain her SENCo responsibilities ensuring inclusion remains at the heart of our thinking. Equally, in terms of recruitment we have been careful to appoint people who have a range of backgrounds and expertise in dealing with different, and sometimes more complex needs.</p> <p><b>SALT:</b> Over the last few years Clare Mount has purchased our own SALT services to meet the shortfall in the LA/NHS provision, whilst also training staff to deliver elements of this programme. Since Autumn 2025, a High Needs Funding review means that Clare Mount gets 1.5 days of SALT therapy to compliment the work of our staff. 67 pupils are on the NHS list.</p> <p><b>Disadvantaged pupils:</b> There is no academic gap between our pupils who are pupil premium and those who are not. However, we put a range of support measures in place to ensure that all our pupils have as equal</p>
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opportunity as possible. This includes significant investment in our reading and literacy programme, our counselling services and learning mentors. Staff can also bid into a pot of PP funding for special projects (e.g. reward trips for disadvantaged pupils to boost their attendance gap, or for girls to boost their attainment gap).

**Children Looked After:** Clare Mount works very closely with Wirral Virtual School to promote and develop best practice for Children Looked After. Following a Virtual School workshop, Clare Mount started to work with Nick Barwick (who had been through the care system himself) and his company INSIGHT to offer a range of inspirational talks to our staff and CLAs. In 2023/24, this led to 3 CLAs having 1 to 1 counselling with Nick, and in 2024/25 5 other pupils working with 1 of Nick's team. We have made a commitment that all our CLAs will access a block of counselling each year should they and their carers feel they require it. Equally, we support all our CLAs to ensure that they can access residential experiences or extra-curricular opportunities and interests that they have shown a passion or talent in. We try to give all our CLAs a sense of belonging and togetherness, organising termly trips for them to ensure and share memorable experiences. This included last year going on a canal boat cruise in Cheshire, a trip to see the illuminations in Blackpool, and a bowling trip to New Brighton.

**Sharing best practice:** In December 2024, our work around offering our CLA's mental health support and unique experiences formed the basis of a talk Clare Mount was asked to give by Wirral Virtual School to other schools on Wirral around best practice. Subsequently, Clare Mount, the Virtual School and Future Action have collaborated on taking our work around RISE-UP movement breaks and creating a Wirral RISE-UP network which now involves 16 other schools – 2 of which Meadowside and Impact – presented case studies at our Conference in November.

Further collaboration has involved Daniel Wilshere from Damaged Goods working on the esteem needs of our CLA pupils <https://damaged-goods.co.uk/about/> and then being invited to present to all schools across Wirral by the Virtual School.

**Children known to children's social care:** In keeping with Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, our learning mentors work closely with parents and local charities to ensure our children known to children's social care have their basic physiological and safety needs met. This includes offering a daily breakfast club, and ensuring other food can be accessed through the day. They offer food-banks, presents at Christmas, and when possible financial assistance through Caritas or Friends of Clare Mount to support trips and residential experiences.

In organising a trip to Kenya in 2024, for example, staff and the wider school community raised over £30k to make this accessible to all.

In terms of love and belonging needs, we talk to all pupil's about having 'safe' people and 'safe' places to go to in-school. Similarly, we prioritise some counselling help and support for any pupil we recognise as struggling emotionally and socially due to changing circumstances at home.

Relationships are key.

**Parental engagement:** Recognising that for some of our children help and support is needed at home, Clare Mount organises a 'family welcome' when pupils first join school in Year 7. In addition to this, we have introduced a day a week when parents/carers can 'drop-in' to Clare Mount on a Thursday to access advice, guidance and support from Caritas around a whole range of issues, Similarly, we have collaborated with the Wirral Mental Health in Schools Team (WMST) to offer a 12-week Riding the Rapids course for up to 12 parents from January 2026 to help parents manage and understand the behaviours of their children.

Once our community café is up and running next academic year, we hope to re-establish and develop a 'bungalow pal's parent group.

<p><b>Curriculum and Teaching</b></p>	<p>Strong with Exceptional features</p>	<p><b>Multiple Curricula - One Vision!</b> Our curriculum, as highlighted in our most recent inspection report in November 2021 is ambitious, broad, flexible and aspirational. We believe it to be fully inclusive, too, and we achieve this through a range of measures listed below: Clare Mount operates with several different curricula, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A 'Primary Model' Curriculum at Year 7</li> <li>• Secondary Model Curriculum from Year 8 Onwards</li> <li>• Vocational and Academic Pathways at Key Stage 4</li> <li>• Aspire Curriculum – identified students from Years 7-11</li> <li>• 6<sup>th</sup> Form – Enhanced Transition to Further Education and Careers</li> </ul> <p><b>Enhanced Transition:</b> In recognition that our new Year 7 cohort each September generally includes 75-80% of students with ASC as primary need and 20-25% of students with MLD as primary need, we deliver a 'primary pastoral and curriculum model' to the majority of those students. Backed up by the recruitment of specialist primary-trained teaching staff, this ensures that our students quickly feel safe, settled and ready to learn before transitioning to a more traditional secondary curriculum model at the start of Year 8. Evidence for how this curriculum is 'co-created' with our students, their families and our teachers, is the existence in some years of a primary model class in Year 8 – recognition that for some students, more than one year is required before they are ready to transition from space to space for their lessons.</p> <p><b>Curriculum breadth and balance:</b> Core and foundation subjects, taught throughout Key Stage 3, are complemented by a range of creative subjects (music, drama, art and design, design technology, food technology and forestry skills). All our students also receive an enhanced curriculum in PSHE, Preparation for Adulthood and Citizenship (an average of over 120 minutes per week devoted to these subjects across the key stage) in recognition of the extra time needed for character education and personal development and to ensure our most vulnerable students are safe.</p> <p><b>Pathways:</b> During Year 9, school leaders and teaching staff use a range of data (EKS2 Assessment data, subject assessments, student and parent consultation) to decide on an appropriate KS4 pathway for each student. Our aim is to create a KS4 curriculum that offers a traditional academic pathway for some, and a supportive vocational pathway for others – with an overriding aim of providing the most appropriate curriculum for ALL Decisions correct and adapt to needs of pupils. These pathways, introduced in September 2025 have been universally successful to date. There is a recognition amongst school leaders that this process requires review EVERY YEAR due to the changing needs of each cohort of students entering KS4.</p> <p><b>Staff voice 24-25:</b> 68% of staff felt our curriculum was '<b>aspirational</b>', with 32% feeling it was aspirational to some extent.</p> <p>Our <b>Aspire</b> base gives pupils with greater anxiety and complex needs the opportunity to follow a similar curriculum, led by subject leaders but delivered with the security of students being able to return to their 'home' classroom if they become dysregulated.</p> <p><b>6<sup>th</sup> Form:</b> Our ambition is for the majority of our students to move on to FE college at the end of Year 11. However, for some students, this transition comes too early at the age of 16 and our 6<sup>th</sup> form provision reflects this. Students in 6<sup>th</sup> form complete at least 2 BTEC Introductory qualifications each year, while participating in a curriculum which focuses on personal development, independent living skills, financial literacy and the confidence to take the 'next steps' in their education / career. <b>Refer to P16 section.</b></p> <p><b>Reading/Literacy, Numeracy and Oracy:</b> Since 2023, all Clare Mount students have participated in a comprehensive reading and literacy programme, in recognition of the major impact improved reading and literacy can have across the curriculum. On 4 days each week, students participate in one of the following: Accelerated Reader (for strong readers),</p>
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Reading Plus (for the majority of the school cohort) or phonics (for those students who find sustained difficulty in reading). This programme has had significant impact. On average, every student in school has increased their reading age by over 14 months (compared with an average of 0.4 months in the equivalent period before the start of the programme). The reading programme also represents another example of how, as an organisation, we are open to change / moderation / adaptation with the delivery of the current year's reading programme differing slightly to the previous year's provision in order to facilitate more time for our students to spend with the pastoral staff.

**Oracy:** The provision of Oracy is strong across the school. Every department has its own approach to the development of oracy with outstanding practice evident in the teaching of both modern foreign languages and humanities.

**Numeracy:** Every student in Clare Mount has numeracy targets agreed by form teachers and mathematics staff at the start of each year. The school's approach to numeracy focuses on those functional life skills that promote independence. Money Management, telling the time, interpreting every day statistics are examples of skills that are taught in every subject in school under the guidance of the mathematics department. At Key Stage 4, we further develop our students' numeracy by working in partnership (Community Capacity Builders) on a 7-week Financial Life Skills programme for all students in year 10 - directly supporting their transition to post-16 independence. We recognise the significant impact of the reading and literacy programme over the past two years and have plans to match this with a framework for oracy and numeracy in the next 12 months.

**Teaching:** Clare Mount's curriculum meets the varied cognitive and sensory needs of students. Working alongside the National Autistic Society (NAS), we have ensured that all teachers are able to implement adaptive teaching techniques such as scaffolding, reducing cognitive load and removing sensory barriers. Lesson observations, conducted twice per year for ALL teaching staff, focus on the 4 areas of need for youngsters with ASC. Observing staff use a proforma and feedback process which ensures teachers are constantly and consistently working together to improve both the environment they teach in and the resources they use for teaching and learning. Once every 12 months, the school undergoes a voluntary inspection by the NAS, which has recently led to our award as a Beacon School. We use the National College People Development programme (formerly known as Blue Sky) as our means of agreeing professional objectives for all our staff on an annual basis. These objectives, based on national standards and local need are commensurate with the individual roles our staff fulfil within the school. Blue Sky is also the system we use for requesting and evaluating individual Continuous Professional Development and Learning (CPDL) activities on an ongoing basis. All staff meet with their designated line manager 3 times per year to discuss progress against objectives and individual aspirations and training.

**Assessment:** Progress is 'checked' continuously on a formative basis and summatively through progress checks conducted at the end of each term. In May each year, just prior to the start of the external exam season, a week of internal examinations takes place in order to assess progress in every subject. We also use this week as an opportunity to prepare our Year 10 students, practically and emotionally, for their future external examinations by conducting their assessments under GCSE exam conditions.

**Professional Development and Quality Assurance:** Teaching and learning is quality assured each term through work scrutiny, informal observations (learning walks) and through ongoing consultation with students and parents. Blue Sky is used, continuously, as a tool to encourage individual professional development and creates an ongoing dialogue between all staff and their line manager. Clare Mount implements

		<p>all strategic meetings using a model called 'Flourish'. Flourish is based on the work of Nancy Kline and the development of a 'Thinking Environment' in large organisations – based on mutual respect, empathy and growth mindset.</p> <p>Action Research: Every member of Clare Mount staff, as part of the annual professional development process, produces a piece of 'Action Research' (examples available on request) in which staff work with an individual or small cohort on a programme / project / intervention identified to improve engagement, belonging, learning or physical and mental health. Progress is measured using the 'Bounce Together' survey tool, which encourages staff to take a scientific approach (e.g. pre- and post- surveys) towards any intervention they deliver.</p> <p><b>Curriculum – Working in Partnership:</b> Clare Mount, through popular, immersive and/or twilight CPD for primary and secondary school staff and through direct work with local primary schools ensures, on an ongoing basis, that the expertise, passion and commitment of school staff has a much wider impact than just within the school walls. In 2024-2025, over 100 local school staff attended CPD delivered by Clare Mount staff in sensory processing, mental health and sensory spaces. A further 100+ professionals have attended 'Move Well' conferences at Clare Mount, focusing on the vital role movement plays in learning and personal development. Direct work by Clare Mount staff with colleagues from Orret's Meadow (our principal feeder school), West Kirby School and College, Weatherhead Teaching Alliance and a range of partner primary schools enhances our reputation as a 'Beacon' for both health and wellbeing and inclusive education.</p>
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<b>Achievement</b>	Exceptional	<p><b>Results:</b> When our students join us in year 7, the vast majority are working at significantly below national standards (see context). Despite this – and the fact that the average attainment 8 score for a young person with an EHCP in England is currently 14.5, our attainment 8 trends and most-recent scores demonstrates exceptional performance. We believe that our culture of belonging, our vision of 'role-models and catalysts for change' manifested in such programmes as our primary model curriculum at Year 7 and our whole-school literacy programme are major, demonstrable, causal factors for this success.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="512 1285 1203 1415"> <thead> <tr> <th>Year</th> <th>A8 (All)</th> <th>P8</th> <th>A8 (Disadv)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>2023</td> <td>16.2</td> <td>-0.39</td> <td>15.2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2024</td> <td>17</td> <td>-0.15</td> <td>13.7</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2025</td> <td>19.8</td> <td>N/A</td> <td>20.2</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>As can be seen above, there is now no gap – at all – in attainment for our most disadvantaged students and their peers.</p> <p>Lesson observations, learning walks and regular work scrutinies show that our pupils develop the foundational knowledge and skills they need and our inclusive focus (including the S.T.E.P. Principle and accommodating the 4 areas of need for our youngsters with ASC) can be evidenced through these processes.</p> <p><b>Destinations:</b></p> <p>Our Year 11 and P16 leavers looked as follows:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="512 1762 1254 2042"> <thead> <tr> <th>Destinations</th> <th>Wirral Met</th> <th>Coleg Cambria</th> <th>Tranmere Rovers</th> <th>Cheshire College</th> <th>LMA (Music)</th> <th>Myers-cough College</th> <th>NEET</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Destinations 2024</td> <td>22</td> <td>7</td> <td>1</td> <td>1</td> <td>1</td> <td>1</td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Destinations 2025 – 46</td> <td>24</td> <td>5</td> <td>3</td> <td>2</td> <td></td> <td>Other: 2</td> <td>1</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Year	A8 (All)	P8	A8 (Disadv)	2023	16.2	-0.39	15.2	2024	17	-0.15	13.7	2025	19.8	N/A	20.2	Destinations	Wirral Met	Coleg Cambria	Tranmere Rovers	Cheshire College	LMA (Music)	Myers-cough College	NEET	Destinations 2024	22	7	1	1	1	1	1	Destinations 2025 – 46	24	5	3	2		Other: 2	1
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Out of the 23 pupils who left Clare Mount specifically in P16 last year, 22 are still attending College whilst 1 is transitioning to Autism Together.

**Pathways – Make-up of courses pupils opt for: This informs our curriculum:**

Pathways 2024	A-Levels	Animal Care	Sport	Prep for Life	Catering	Creative Media	Hair & Beauty	Construction &	Music / Perf Arts	Business	Army	ICT	NEET
34		7	6	6	3	3	2	2	2	1	1		1
2025 (46)	5	2	6	15		1		2	2	1		3	1

Our achievement is even more exceptional when you consider 50% of our students are assessed as having pre-KS1 Maths and English scaled scores when they join Clare Mount, and only 13% have reached the expected scaled scores for EKS2. Yet, our pupils all progress to college or 6<sup>th</sup> form.

In Summer 2025, Clare Mount students achieved an average of 5.6 GCSE (or equivalent) qualifications. Attainment 8, overall was 19.8 with the highest performing student achieving a score of 50, 14% of students achieving an attainment 8 score of between 40-50 and 27% of students achieving attainment 8 of between 30-50.

10 students achieved a grade 4 or above in English Language (23%). 11 students achieved a grade 4 or above in Mathematics. 8 students achieved a grade 4 or above in BOTH English and Maths. 7 students achieved 5 or more GCSEs or equivalent at Grades 9-4.

When additional qualifications are included in these impressive figures, Clare Mount students achieved an average of 8.8 qualifications

In 6<sup>th</sup> form, students completed a total of 68 BTEC Introductory qualifications and 7 students achieved a higher grade in their English and/or Maths GCSE qualifications through the retake process.

**Attendance and Behaviour**

Strong with Exceptional features

As highlighted in previous Ofsted reports, and through NAS accreditation visits, Clare Mount leaders and staff do create a calm, orderly, respectful, supportive and positive environment in which pupils can thrive. Feedback from parents at a recent Year 8 parents' evening (Autumn 2025), included such comments as: "Wonderful teachers", "Our child has progressed amazingly and his self-confidence has come on leaps and bounds all down to the school. Thank you", "The school is great, my child is very happy there", and "Exceptional school with exceptional staff. Everyone has been wonderful with my son". These comments reflect a school that fosters a positive and respectful culture in which staff know, support and care about pupils". Further comments from a Year 7 parents' evening (Dec 25) highlight our success in developing pupils' motivation and positive attitudes to learning. They reinforce the exceptional relationships we nurture, ensuring pupils feel 'settled and safe' in Year 7, before going on to be 'Great in Year 8', 'Shine in Year 9', 'Explore in Key Stage 4' and 'Thrive in Key Stage 5'. Comments include: "We are so happy we made the right choice of school that meets all of son's needs and he is happy there", and "Thank you to all of the staff who blatantly understand my son's needs - he finally feels like he can be himself, he feels accepted and this is evident in his everyday life. The impact that school has, goes well beyond the walls of the school building - it has transformed our lives and given us our son back. We can't thank you enough for all you do every day".

**Attendance:** In terms of context, Special schools consistently have higher absence rates than primary and secondary schools owing to a range of

		<p>factors such as medical needs, mental health and anxiety. With an increased number of pupils with neurodiversity, we have pupils who experience greater struggles with change, anxiety in adapting to new social settings, and sensory overload at school, leading to avoidance. More pupils than ever are on roll at Clare Mount, some through tribunal, who have a history of school refusal or have been on part-time timetables in primary school so from the out-set we are battling to change hearts and minds, and develop strong partnerships with parents/carers.</p> <p>Despite this situation, our attendance by comparison with other Special Schools is strong. Post-Covid (despite increased numbers) our attendance has consistently remained around the 89% mark, with DfE statistics indicating other special schools to be closer to 87%,</p> <p>The attendance of our 18 Children Looked After is exceptional at 97.4%, showing the amazing relationships we have with carers and the virtual school. Our PP attendance is currently lower than the rest of our school population at 86.8%, however, girls' attendance is higher than boys at 91.4%.</p> <p>The attendance of our 3 pupils in Child Protection is mixed. On one extreme, Child 1 is as low as 22.2% with significant housing issues and parental medical issues. School is working with various agencies, however, to provide 'basic' food banks, funding and bedding, and ensuring our counselling team and learning mentors do regular home visits. School has purchased a 'seat' with EdClass to pilot with this boy in the Spring Term, along with our 2 other school refusers who have severe anxiety and struggle to even leave the house.</p> <p>Child 2 loves school, however, attendance has fallen to 74% due to a breakdown in parental relationships and a move out of area impacted on transport to school. Again, school has put in place significant support including securing the pupil a place at Derwen College next year which will promote his independence.</p> <p>Child 3 is at 89.6% attendance. School has done a remarkable job keeping him in school, and providing him with the security of our base, with countless police incidents and bail conditions stretching family networks.</p> <p>All of the above case studies, demonstrate our exceptional commitment to working with families, especially disadvantaged and those with mental health issues, to improve attendance.</p> <p>All of the above case studies, demonstrates our exceptional commitment to supporting parents / carers and pupils, especially disadvantaged and those with mental health/medical issues, to attend school. We have high aspirations (even if our outcomes are not there yet) to get back to pre-Covid levels (95%). We understand this will be gradual and progressive, but we have the following <b>Strategies for Improving attendance:</b></p> <p><b>Understanding the Root Cause:</b> Clare Mount has used proactive, supportive engagement with parents to identify the specific reasons for absence. We have hosted EBSA, Riding the Rapids and Trauma-Informed training for parents and staff, employed a counsellor from Caritas to work specifically with parents one day a week, as well as increasing our counselling offer to pupils around managing their anxiety once they have returned to school.</p> <p><b>Flexible &amp; Child-Centred Approaches:</b> Clare Mount has purchased a 'seat' on EdClass and used Orrets Meadow Outreach service for our school refusers to help bridge the gap between school and home, We have also allocated additional hours for TA support to help build relationships. Once in school, Clare Mount has piloted the use of the AV1 robot and subsequently purchased a device ourselves as a tool to build confidence in actually getting pupils back into the classroom. This has been complimented by installing an immersive classroom with plans to be able to showcase different rooms around school in a 'safe' space.</p> <p>School has adopted flexible reintegration plans with part-time timetables offered and reviewed, with regular in-school attendance the goal.</p>
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**Dedicated Staff & Resources:** As well as having dedicated staff with responsibilities for attendance, Clare Mount signed up to the LA Inclusive Attendance Bronze Award in 2025, with all staff offered 6 CPD modules around different aspects of attendance with the over-riding culture one of attendance being everyone's responsibility.

All this is complimented by increasingly consistent policies around attendance (e.g. holiday requests, fixed penalty notices), especially if parents stop working with us to get their child back into school, and better data tracking by tutors and pastoral leaders.

Parents recognise the extraordinary lengths we go to make pupils want to come to school. Comments include: "He is absolutely loving school for the first time in years. Clare Mount has made him love learning again and has gained such confidence in himself" (Jan 25), and "My child has only been at Clare Mount for one term, however after 2 years on non-attendance in mainstream, the difference in her is astounding. Thank you for all you do for her." (Jan 24).

Attendance tracker:

Pre-Covid	2021/2	2022/3	2023/4	2024/5	Current
<b>94-95% Only 190 pupils</b>	90.9%	90.8%	89.4%	89.1%	89.6% (25.1.26)
<b>Persistent Absence U85%</b>	20.8%	21.2%	25.4%	23.7%	
<b>P.A. U80%</b>	14.1%	9.9%	18.5%	15.2%	

% of persistent absentees is decreasing as shown above from 2023/4 to 2024/5. The % below 90% has also gone from 34.6% last year to 30.4% across Autumn Term 2025, and 38.6% national average according to Arbor.

**Behaviour:** Behaviour is exceptional overall at Clare Mount as staff take time to build relationships and get to know pupils.

**Parent comments:** This is reflected in feedback from parents including "Such a great school for my son. He has come on so much, thanks to this amazing school and teachers", "My son has flourished at this school, and it was a great choice for him", and "Clare Mount is an excellent school with excellent staff that puts the child's needs first. Each child is an individual and has their own needs which the school takes into consideration. The school knows each pupil and does what's best for them." (Parents' Evening, January 2024).

Whilst behaviour is exceptional overall, this is not to say 'unexpected' behaviour does not happen. Our pupils, due to their SEND, are often more vulnerable than their neuro-typical peers, yet the school is quick to act on any emerging patterns or trends. During the previous academic year, for example, the school identified an increase in incidents involving racist language, particularly within Key Stage 3. Through discussions with students and parents, it was recognised that this increase was influenced by pupils' exposure, out-side school, to inappropriate language on social media platforms, including TikTok and YouTube. Due to the complex needs of some pupils at Clare Mount, there are occasions where language is repeated or imitated without a full understanding of its meaning or impact. However, the school also recognises that a small cohort of pupils demonstrates a clear understanding of racism and use such language deliberately to cause offence. All incidents are logged in-line with the school's behaviour and safeguarding policies. In response, the Senior and Middle Leaders have met regularly to analyse incident data and implement targeted strategies to reduce the occurrence of racist language. This work has included strengthening staff awareness, reviewing curriculum provision, and enhancing pupil education around equality, diversity, and respect. As part of this approach, school have researched a range of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion accreditation programmes, one of which will be implemented during the current academic year to support sustained whole-school improvement.

School also recognises and celebrates positive behaviour with pupils gaining Clare Mount points for demonstrating good citizenship and My Personal Best qualities.

**De-escalation:** De-escalation techniques are implemented to support pupils who are not yet able to independently regulate their emotions. The Assistant Head (Pastoral), as an Intermediate Team Teach Trainer, ensures that staff receive regular training and updates through ongoing CPD sessions. The impact of these sessions is evident in improved pupil regulation, resulting in no requirement for physical intervention by staff over the last 2 academic years.

2021/2	2022/3	2023/4	2024/5
1	1	0	0

Clare Mount, therefore, has staff trained to deal with de-escalation but rarely uses team teach techniques. Instead, we prefer pupils to walk ('Flight', rather than 'fight' response) or go to a safe space until they are ready to talk or have a restorative conversation. Pupils are encouraged to take movement breaks and we are developing an 'active corridors' pilot. All pupils are taught how to use an emotional thermometer.

**Training for others:** The school extends its expertise by delivering annual de-escalation training to staff from other schools and ITTs from The Weatherhead Teaching Alliance, supporting wider best practice in behaviour management.

**Changing cohort:** The profile of our pupils has changed in recent years due largely to tribunals with 46.8% having SEMH as a need. 55 out of 461 (11.9%) pupils have SEMH as a primary need despite our school offer being for a primary need of ASC/MLD. Some behaviours have become more challenging, however, these behaviours are not compatible with the calm sensory spaces others require. A small number of pupils who have now transitioned to other settings, better able to meet their needs, account for many of the exclusions in 2024/5.

Year	2021/2	2022/3	2023/4	2024/5	Current	
					2025	2026
No. of exclusions	22	14	14	30	9	1
No. of pupils on roll	202	250	349	376 (17 pupils excluded)	461	
% per pupil	10.9%	5.6%	3.7%	7.9%	1.9%	
SEMH profile				7 pupils from Aspire (1 boy excluded 3 times)	3 pupils from Aspire	

\*no permanent exclusions

**Pupil leadership:** Our pupils are 'role models and catalysts for change' with visitors often commenting on the calm environment, and manners of our pupils. The School Council created a Behaviour Expectations poster which is displayed in every classroom.

<p><b>Personal Development and Wellbeing</b></p>	<p>Exceptional</p>	<p><b>PSHE and Careers Education Curriculum:</b> This is a huge strength of the school. Since our last Ofsted, Clare Mount has appointed new lead teachers of PSHE, as well as Careers &amp; Preparation for Adulthood (see website), and they have made a significant impact in refreshing, enhancing and expanding the curriculum. The intent of our Personal Development (PD) curriculum is to support our students to become informed, confident, healthy, resilient, and empathetic citizens who are fully prepared for life beyond Clare Mount. The PD curriculum has a whole-school impact with My Personal Best assemblies and activities, for example, delivered in weekly form-times with key themes focused around respect for environment, self and others. Similarly, our Preparation for Adulthood curriculum and Careers Education is progressive, is set against Gatsby Benchmarks and through Xello software from Year 9 onwards helps pupils identify careers and industries they might be interested in. School has recently introduced the Skills Builder Framework <a href="https://www.skillsbuilder.uk/">https://www.skillsbuilder.uk/</a> The Framework breaks each of the eight skills down into a sequence of steps, supporting an individual's personal development from absolute beginner through to mastery. It takes soft skills and puts rigour behind them.</p> <p>As numbers at Clare Mount in KS4-5 have grown, Clare Mount has continued to offer Next Step events and work experiences, but also worked with the LA to develop and promote a Preparation for Adulthood Roadmap (using Padlet), joined the Wirral Pledge consortium, offered ASC training to prospective employers and signed up to the Young Enterprise TEAM programme in our efforts to continue to address the findings of the Buckland Review that only 5 in 10 people with SEND, and 3 in 10 with ASC, will gain employment .</p> <p><b>Enrichment for all:</b> "I'm getting in touch because colleagues have signposted Clare Mount Specialist Sports College for their <b>strong and inspiring enrichment programme</b>. Thank you for the fantastic work you're doing to support pupils' wider development" – Jenny, DfE, Enrichment Policy Team (Oct 25).</p> <p>At Clare Mount, all pupils have equal access to and participate in interesting and relevant extra-curricular activities (see Termly plan). In Autumn 2025, Clare Mount offered 107 weekly clubs. In October 2025, the DfE requested 3 case studies (see above) putting a spotlight on Clare Mount as part of their new Enrichment Framework to support other schools and colleges in offering a high-quality, inclusive enrichment offer. The guidance was co-created with experts from education, including Clare Mount, to showcase non-statutory best practice guidance designed to help settings plan their enrichment offer more strategically and intentionally, while supporting schools to increase access to enrichment for all their learners.</p> <p>The DfE, under the title <i>Enrichment for All</i>, also used the following in their communication materials: <b>Special Setting: Clare Mount Specialist Sports College, North West</b>. At Clare Mount Specialist Sports College, every Wednesday they have a Community night with sport, art, cookery, health and beauty. Liverpool FC in the Community run sessions for pupils and they can also take part in the basketball academy. This links into inclusive sport leagues for mainstream, special and AP schools.</p> <p>With the move to the new school site, and enhanced facilities, Clare Mount now offers a comprehensive W.I.S.H programme (Wirral Inclusive Sports Hub) with up to 100 pupils attending a Football Academy (Monday), a Cricket Academy (Tuesday), Community Night (Wednesday), Dance Academy and School Games events (Thursday), with staff well-being the focus on Friday. As well as focusing on the breadth of our enrichment offer, the case studies also celebrated our Partnership working with other agencies to stretch and leverage resources, and also the engagement of our staff who themselves have become 'role models and catalysts the change'.</p> <p>DfE feedback to case studies: "A huge, huge thank you for pulling together the case studies and additional materials — they're exactly what we were looking for and inspiring to read. I especially appreciated the breadth of enrichment activities, the strong emphasis on staff and pupil wellbeing, and the creative use of partnerships to extend opportunities. The inclusion of</p>
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visual examples and the MOVE WELL Conference outline really helped bring the work to life. Please do pass on my thanks to all the colleagues at Clare Mount who contributed — I really appreciate the time, thought, and care that’s gone into showcasing your work. It’s a fantastic example of inclusive, whole-school enrichment in action” (Jenny, DfE, Nov 25).

**Staff voice (2024-205):** 74% of staff believe Personal Development (My Personal Best, employability and character traits) are well developed, with 24% feeling to some extent.

**Well-Being:** Well-being of pupils, staff and the wider community is at the heart of school life at Clare Mount.

Clare Mount was a founding member of the North West Healthy Schools Forum, and subsequently became 1 of 5 Beacon Well Schools working in partnership with the Youth Sport Trust over the last 5 years to create a framework for a Well Schools Health Check and Accreditation (achieving both of these ourselves in 2025). By Nov 25, 378 schools had completed the Health Check with 3 Senior Leaders at Clare Mount encouraged to become peer reviewers for other schools wishing to seek accreditation. Clare Mount has led workshops on Well Culture and Lead Well at local, regional and national conferences in 2025, hosting our own Move Well Conference in November over the last 2 years. Over 120 delegates have attended, with feedback from the last event showing that 82% of attendees strongly agreed it would positively impact on the practice, with the other 18% agreeing.

From a staff perspective, our Head of PSHE has led on empowering staff around well-being through the Human Kind Award which has led to a Well-Being Charter for both staff and pupils. Having embedded, Move Well messages across school, we are using Bounce Together surveys to capture the wellbeing of our pupils and staff, enabling them to Lead Well and measure impact. Our Year 9s, for example, are currently driving the Bite Back programme auditing and shaping healthy eating in school.

**Looking after mental health and maintaining an active lifestyle:**

Clare Mount promotes self-care and equips all pupils with strategies to manage their own mental health, as well as recognise when they may need a movement break (e.g. Emotional Thermometer) or to engage in a strategy to help their mood (e.g. Art Therapy, Lego Therapy). We organise 3 pupil well-being days a year with themes like ‘5 ways to well-being’. We equip staff and parents to better deal with mental issues, taking early action as Youth Mental Health First Aiders, with annual 2-day training offered at Clare Mount by Mr Byrne. **177 people trained in last 3 years.**

April 2022 to March 2024	April 2024 to August 2025	2025/2026 Academic Year
41 parents 37 staff 51 coaches/volunteers	19 parents 13 staff	16 parents (19 <sup>th</sup> & 26 <sup>th</sup> Jan). Demand for 2 <sup>nd</sup> course.

Typical feedback: Absolutely invaluable; everyone should have the chance to do this course. I’ve learned so much, been given so much to think about. I’m re-thinking my approach to how best to help my children when they’re anxious or stressed.  
Amazing thank you.  
Fabulous course, informative and thought provoking.  
Fantastic.  
I think this course has been amazing... really empowering.

Clare Mount has established an effective counselling programme with referrals made by form tutors in Year meetings. Our partners include Caritas (3.5 days), CCB (1 day), and then free services from Health Services in School (0.5 days) and Mental Health in Schools Team (0.5 days), giving us coverage across the week. Counselling sessions are driven by the preferences of the pupils with some happy to sit at a table, others happier to lie in a hammock or under a weighted blanket, with others happiest to have a more active ‘theraplay’ session. Most common reasons

identified by pupils for support are managing relationships/friendships, low mood and anxiety, and anger management.

2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
143 blocks delivered to 122 pupils	182 blocks delivered to 129 pupils	62 blocks to 52 pupils in Autumn 2025

A range of other partner compliment the pastoral support offered to our pupils with some Year 8s currently involved in a mental health programme called Primal, and others working with Action for Children on Bouncing Back (Year 8s) and Blues (Year 10s).

**Pastoral support:** Regular pastoral meetings mean that leaders and staff, including our Learning Mentors, are vigilant in identifying individuals or groups who need additional support (see Attendance and Behaviour trackers), with 'talk times' also called focusing on particular pupils if an immediate concern is raised. Leaders have been proactive in responding to growing numbers by allocating each Head of Year with a HLTA to offer additional pastoral support, as well as creating Heads of Upper and Lower School. With growing numbers in Year 7 due to tribunals in 2025/26, leaders have appointed a Head of Transitions as well as a Head of Year 7 to give extra capacity. Similarly, with growing numbers of pupils with more complex needs or anxiety around coming to school we have appointed a Head of Year to Aspire (our in-house base).

**Belonging:** As part of a wider push to help new pupils develop a connection with pupils and staff in other classes and year groups, Clare Mount established a House system in 2023/24 to further promote a sense of belonging, inclusion and togetherness. Every pupil, and member of staff, is allocated a House on joining Clare Mount, with the School Council responsible for naming the Houses after famous people that they felt fully represented the school population – Tajira (Autism), Ali (Dyslexia), Jordan (ADHD) and Attenborough (Environment). A calendar of events takes place through the Year, including House Day, Sports Day and National School Sport Week. Points are awarded for both taking part and winning, with events focused around the acronym **A TEAM**, which stands for **Active, Technological, Employable, Artistic and Mindful** – with various team challenges designed to help pupils find their passion.

**Residential and unique experiences** also help us develop effective relationships with pupils, parents and the community. These experiences act as inspiration, creating a snowball effect, with other pupils holding their hands up to have a go in future. Clare Mount has continued to offer residential experiences to Year 7s at Barnstondale, Year 8s at the Conway Centre, Year 9s at PGL Shropshire, as well as Duke of Edinburgh Camps in Key Stage 4. Staff have tirelessly organised mixed year trips to Tattenhall (PSHE), and bi-annual trips to Paris (MFL) and Dorset (Geography). Many of our pupils missed out on such opportunities during Covid-19 and have never stayed away from home overnight let alone been abroad. Since our last Ofsted Inspection in 2021, we have also enabled our pupils to continue to be 'role models and catalysts for change' in volunteering at the Special Olympics World Games in Berlin (2023) and running the practice range scoreboard at The British Golf Open at Royal Liverpool (2023). Our pupils have also been participants in the European School Sport Federation (ESSF) Games in Athens (2024 & 2025), with school also raising over £30k to support pupils to have a life-changing experience teaching and helping build classrooms in Kenya (2024) through African Adventures. These experiences would not be possible without an exceptional understanding of the needs of our pupils and what they are capable of. This demonstrates our exceptional care in helping pupils with SEND develop independence, contribute to the community, make positive friendships and be as healthy as possible. In 2026/27, our inspirational journey is set to continue with another 22 pupils and 6 staff going back to Kenya in February, roles offered at the British Golf Open at Royal Birkdale in July, and plans for our first ever ski trip in 2027.

Pupils are aware of their Rights through Rights Respecting Schools. The school also has themed weeks in keeping with Anti-Bullying, Safer Internet and Mental Health Awareness Week. Through termly Pupil Well-Being Days, Heads of Year also educate pupils about relevant themes such as relationships and consent.

<p><b>Post 16</b></p>	<p>Exceptional</p>	<p><b>Our Purpose and Vision:</b> The Sixth Form at Clare Mount Specialist Sports College is a dedicated bridge to adulthood, offering a further period of personalised support for learners who will benefit from a tailored transition before taking their next steps.</p> <p>While our aspiration for every Year 11 student is to progress directly to college, an apprenticeship, or employment, we recognise that some young people require a more supported pathway. Our Sixth Form provides that vital launchpad, equipping students with the qualifications, confidence and life skills they need to thrive in adulthood.</p> <p><b>Staff voice (2024-25): 92% feel school helps pupils be aspirational around career choices</b>, with 8% to some extent (this reflects wider criticisms by Ofsted of the LA SEND partnership).</p> <p><b>A Personalised Curriculum:</b> We believe every student's journey is unique. Moving beyond a standard post-16 curriculum, we deliver a bespoke, balanced programme focused squarely on the individual and their future. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Academic Foundation – Study of two BTEC subjects to build specialised knowledge and skills.</li> <li>· Core Skills Mastery – Continued English and Maths, with GCSE resit opportunities where appropriate, to ensure a solid foundation for life and work.</li> <li>· Real-World Experience – A dedicated weekly work-experience day to develop employability skills and professional networks.</li> <li>· Personal Development – A comprehensive Personal and Social Development programme fostering independence and resilience.</li> <li>· Enterprise and Economics – Participation in the Young Enterprise scheme to build business and financial awareness.</li> <li>· Health and Wellbeing – A focused Health &amp; Leisure strand promoting a balanced, healthy lifestyle.</li> <li>· A Culture of Reading – A dedicated reading programme to enhance communication and comprehension.</li> </ul> <p><b>Our Commitment: Breaking Down Barriers to Employment:</b> Our staff are passionately committed to dismantling the barriers that our young people can face. We are driven by the stark finding of the recent Buckland Review – that an autistic person has less than a 30% chance of gaining paid employment in their lifetime.</p> <p>We are determined to change this narrative for every Clare Mount student. Our entire Sixth Form programme is built around one core mission: to ensure every learner leaves us with the best possible opportunity to secure paid employment and build a fulfilling, independent adult life.</p> <p>At Clare Mount Sixth Form, we don't just teach subjects – we prepare young adults for life.</p> <p><b>Parent and Carer Voices: 2025-2026:</b>          "Our daughter came to Clare Mount High School in September 2024 having been in mainstream school previously. Clare Mount Sixth form has developed her in many ways. She has found a much greater understanding of life and has developed a higher degree of social interaction which is all credit to the school and teachers. She has found many new friends and formed close links to all teachers, myself and wife have appreciated how this has helped her. I would sincerely encourage any student who has the opportunity to learn in this school to take the chance and grow going forward kind regards".          - January 2026.</p>
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		<p>“Our son had a wonderfully positive and transformative sixth-form experience at Clare Mount Specialist Sports College. Staff foster excellent relationships through open communication, active listening and trust. The happy, relaxed atmosphere encouraged him to focus on his personal growth with confidence.</p> <p>A standout aspect was the dedicated support for planning his next steps. Staff genuinely cared about helping each student find a path that suited them best, making the process less overwhelming and more empowering. From the ‘Next Steps’ event – which I attended two years running because there was so much on offer – to signposting us to useful facilitators, we felt well-supported in deciding the best further-education option for our son. We are so grateful to the staff team, who went above and beyond to help secure his residential college place on a pathway that is important to him.” - October 2025.</p> <p>“Our son’s time at Clare Mount Specialist Sports College was truly transformative. During his sixth-form years, he grew in confidence and independence, supported by a nurturing environment that encouraged him to believe in his potential. With the guidance of dedicated staff, he successfully achieved his English and Maths GCSEs – an accomplishment that opened doors to valuable work experience and eventual employment at Stellantis (Vauxhall Motors). His hard work and determination were recognised when he was awarded Student of the Year 2024, a proud moment that reflected his incredible journey. We are deeply grateful to Clare Mount for helping him thrive both academically and personally.” – October 2025.</p> <p><b>Destinations and Transition Support:</b> All Sixth Form students receive individual careers advice and guidance. Our transition support includes visits to local colleges, taster sessions and personalised planning to ensure every student moves successfully to their next placement. Recent destinations include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Wirral Metropolitan College – courses including Prep for Life, Sport, IT and more.</li> <li>· Birkenhead Sixth Form College – A-Level and other Level 3 courses.</li> <li>· Coleg Cambria – Prep for Life and Animal Studies.</li> <li>· Derwent Residential College – Performing Arts.</li> </ul> <p><b>Community Involvement and Fundraising:</b> Our Sixth Form students actively engage with and take great pride in supporting their community. We maintain strong links with the charity Autism Together, with students planning and organising events such as the annual school Santa Dash to raise funds and awareness.</p> <p>The Sixth Form has also adopted Wear Pink Breast Cancer Awareness as an annual charity focus. Students coordinate a range of activities on Wear Pink Day, raising over £1,500 in recent events.</p> <p>Additionally, for several years students have supported the Stick ‘n’ Step charity. This academic year, as part of an enterprise activity, they have designed and sold textile products to the school community and beyond, with all proceeds donated to the charity.</p>
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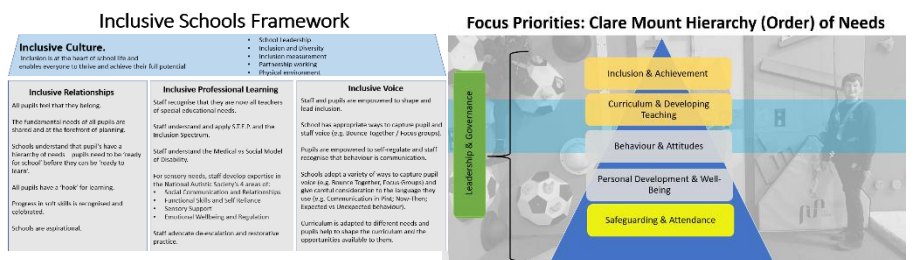
**Leadership and Governance**

Exceptional

As highlighted in the context and previous sections of this SEF, Leaders and Governors have embraced and managed change with a great deal of success. The outcomes for our pupils are exceptional, despite the challenges we have faced around increasing numbers and delays to improving the environment with the building being subject to a Pfl agreement. Leaders have high expectations and professionalism. We advocate a 'Inclusive' and 'Well' Culture, as exemplified by the Well Schools Framework which we have created for others to use as a template to follow:



Our Headteacher is an Ambassador for the Youth Sport Trust and as a school we have a track record of developing mutually beneficial partnerships with a range of organisations who share our common purpose and goals for the benefit of our pupils, staff and wider community. Pupils and staff at Clare Mount are motivated and empowered to belong, achieve and thrive. Leaders and Governors have been proactive in adapting to the SEND landscape, recruiting and training excellent staff, being a 'beacon' for others to follow, and continue to offer 'exceptional' education and outcomes despite a 'failing' SEND system (ISOS) and an LA SEND Partnership given 'notice to improve'. Inclusion is at the heart of school life, and school works collaboratively with other schools, partners, parents and the wider community to advocate inclusion practice (see Inclusive Schools Framework) and well-being, promoting an open and positive safeguarding culture as the basis for our hierarchy of needs (See model below).



Staff and Governors feel valued and leaders regularly remind others of our moral purpose, values and shared vision. Our pupils and staff genuinely see themselves as 'role models and catalysts for change' in promoting and celebrating inclusive practice. Staff and Governors have been consulted with in writing the latest SEF, discussing the standards, and ensuring their voices are listened to and feedback acted upon. Leaders are always interested in how we can 'make things better' and use SWOT analysis, surveys and open dialogue to improve our systems and processes. Leaders are approachable and open-minded, acting on good ideas and are constantly reviewing our calendar, meeting schedule and CPD structure to be mindful of workload and ensure staff have a range of tools and support mechanisms in place to effectively manage their well-being. This is reflected in how few staff we have on long-term sickness, and excellent staff retention. Staff tell us that they feel lucky to be at Clare Mount. Leaders encourage others to showcase their talents with CPD/INSET sessions increasingly led by our own staff in a range of roles including ICT champions to 'ASC/Sensory Champions'. As well as being supportive of Middle Leaders attending NPQ courses, school utilises the skills of aspiring Senior Leaders with 'Associate' leaders' roles designed to help prepare them for the next stage in their leadership journey. Clare Mount not only shares and reviews best practice, but is constantly at the cutting edge of new learning and thinking in relation to inclusion, ASC and SEND. Through introducing Blue Sky, Bounce Together and by having a commitment to all staff creating a 1-page Action Research impact project,

		<p>leaders have developed a highly effective culture of professional learning and expertise, which all staff take responsibility for. Indeed, as part of a Research and Insight community, leaders and staff are currently working with institutions like Liverpool John Moores University (LJMU) to develop best practice around, for example, optimum ASC class sizes, Well Schools and Movement through 3 PhD research projects. More recently, we have agreed to work with LJMU in exploring how artificial intelligence (AI) can support the understanding of emotions and behavioural patterns in autistic children with the aim of developing responsible, practitioner-informed tools that may help families and professionals recognise emotional states more clearly and in a timely way.</p> <p>Governors typically support, encourage and challenge leaders. Staff regularly present to Governors on key themes / projects linked to the SIPD/SEF, including the new Ofsted Framework. Governors are committed to working with leaders in a spirit of trust, collaboration and mutual respect. Beyond Full Governors' meetings, Governors engage in a range of steering groups and attend Governor Link Days or Special Events to showcase and celebrate pupil successes. To make their support as effective and meaningful as possible, Governors have recently organised themselves according to their individual areas of knowledge, expertise, passion, and interests. Examples include a focus on staff wellbeing and the agreed appointment of a new HR/Well-Being Co-ordinator, and support with further developing our parents' and community offer now that we are settled in the new building. The plan is to go beyond our current family welcome, and ADHD/ASC/Mental Health First Aid training, to re-establish a 'bungalow pals' once our Community Café is completed so parents know they always have a 'listening ear' and other parents to collaborate with.</p>
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**Note on Ofsted judgements:** Inspectors will use a **secure fit** methodology in making their judgements. Please begin your self-evaluation using the 'expected' grade criteria before moving onto the 'strong' standards when doing your self-evaluation.

Distinctive strengths	Details	Justification
<b>1. Relations between pupils and staff.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff get to know pupils extremely well by familiarising themselves with Individual Education Plans (IEPs) which go on the Big Buttons.</li> <li>• Through a range of opportunities beyond the classroom – trips, themed days, the house system – pupils and staff develop their sense of belonging and togetherness.</li> <li>• Through Inclusion training, EBSA, and Trauma Informed practice staff have a good knowledge of pupils 'hooks' and strategies to support them when they are dysregulated.</li> <li>• 'Settled and safe' forms the basis of support network, with enhanced transitions and pupils having safe people and safe places to go to throughout their educational journey.</li> </ul>	<p>Annual Review paperwork shows that staff know the pupils at Clare Mount. The same is true for PEPs for our CLAs.</p> <p>SWOT analysis / staff surveys analysis always highlight this as a core strength.</p> <p>Feedback from pupils, parents/carers and visitors.</p>
<b>2. Aspirational and adaptive curriculum.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Primary Model to support transition for most in Year 7, and a small cohort with increased anxieties into Year 8.</li> <li>• Creation of curriculum pathways which offer both nurture, vocational and more academic routes to success.</li> <li>• Communication and collaboration between pastoral and academic leaders.</li> </ul>	<p>Curriculum maps.</p> <p>Achievement results.</p> <p>Development of 'soft' skills allowing pupils to access the curriculum.</p> <p>Transition plans.</p>
<b>3. Opportunities for pupils to belong and thrive.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Our residential programme offers every pupil the chance to develop their independence skills with trips becoming increasingly further away as they progress through school.</li> <li>• Our commitment to bringing guest speakers into school provides inspiration and challenge to our pupils raising their aspirations.</li> <li>• Our leadership opportunities have a 'snowball effect' inspiring others to want to give things a go or try something they have never tried before.</li> </ul>	<p>NAS Beacon Status and reports.</p> <p>Well Schools Beacon status and case studies.</p> <p>Enrichment Framework case studies as best practice.</p> <p>Feedback from parents and pupils around the positive impact of such experiences.</p>

Developing strengths/ improvements since last inspection	Details	Justification
<p><b>1. Work with LA to clarify our admissions policy so parents/carers have a clearer idea of what we and other schools in the area offer.</b></p>	<p>Clare Mount numbers have increased by 86% since the last Ofsted Inspection. Having been asked by the LA to support them to address a 'bulge' year, we have continued to experience considerable growth despite the LA stating that Wirral will actually experience a fall in numbers overall over the next few years (falling birth rate).</p> <p>Clare Mount is at a 'tipping' point with numbers with an ideal number on roll, as agreed with the LA, being 80 in each Year group from Year 7 to Year 11 (400 in total).</p> <p>Clare Mount has clarified its 'school offer' and hopes other schools will follow to help parents and primary schools make more informed choices around which schools can meet need.</p> <p>Wirral LA has created a document detailing Ordinarily Available Provision with <b>Adaptations, Support and Scaffolds</b> being 1 of the 9 core Principles.</p> <p>Clare Mount is committed to working with other schools to offer training around inclusive culture and practice, boosting staff expertise and parent confidence. We believe that in the current educational landscape, that every teacher is a teacher of special educational needs, and strongly advocate inclusive education approaches.</p>	<p>Government Consultation, and ISOS Partnership report, conclude that the current SEND system is 'broken' and in need of urgent and wide-ranging reform. Recent SEND consultations and a delayed White Paper mean this topic will remain high on the agenda for the foreseeable future.</p>
<p><b>2. KS4-5 Transitions</b></p>	<p>Our Careers lead has worked in collaboration with the Head of P16, Head of Upper School and Work-Based Learning Co-ordinator to ensure that pupils more readily identify the skills they need to develop which employers will value:</p> <p>Programmes include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introducing Skills Builder.</li> <li>• Joining the Wirral Pledge.</li> <li>• Becoming part of the Young Enterprise Programme.</li> <li>• Increased number of transition visits to college and future destinations.</li> <li>• As numbers have doubled in KS4, the team have worked to explore innovative ways of engaging more businesses by offering ASC training, and/or developing Careers Week activities with businesses coming into school.</li> </ul>	<p>The Buckland Review shows that only 1 in 5 people with SEND will gain employment, dropping to 1 in 3 people with ASC.</p> <p>The LA SEND Partnership received a notice to improve with 'Prep for Adulthood' and P16 destinations a key focus.</p> <p>With more pupils coming through our KS4 we need to think more creatively about how we offer work experience and appropriate pathways to pupils do not end up NEET.</p>

Priorities for improvement	Strategic actions already/to be undertaken:	Impact so far:
<p><b>1. Managing numbers.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• On-going discussions with the LA.</li> <li>• Recommendations for addressing 'broken SEND landscape' taken from ISOS Partnership and shared with stakeholders.</li> <li>• Advocacy of 'inclusive education' with SEND Start caseworkers, SENDCO's, LA SEND Consultants, WASH Chair, Secondary School Deputy Heads Forum, Wirral LA Chief Executive and SEND Panel Chair, SEND Consultant Adam Boddison, staff, parent focus group. Letters to local MPs.</li> <li>• Networking and sharing best practice with partner agencies (e.g. NAS, YST) and schools experiencing similar challenges (e.g. Bell View, Altbridge).</li> <li>• SEND training offer (Oct to Feb 2025).</li> <li>• Response to LA SEND Consultation (Dec 2025).</li> <li>• Response to Government Online SEND Conversations (Dec 2025).</li> <li>• Advocacy of Government's clear messaging around Inclusion being at the heart of the current school improvement narrative and realisation around SEND that 'schools with high levels of pupils with SEND may face particular pressures on staffing, funding and access to specialist support'. Reforms need to 'promote greater consistency and equity. This includes ensuring that schools committed to inclusive practice are supported rather than penalised' (ASCL, Dec 2025)</li> <li>• Headteacher attends WASH and WHISPA Headteacher forums. Headteacher sits on High Needs Funding sub-group and</li> <li>• Inclusive Schools Partnership model submitted as part of LA SEND Consultation as well as a Framework for Inclusive Schools.</li> <li>• Letter to parents including paragraph on numbers and LA 'Ordinarily Available Provision' publication and opportunity to meet Head to discuss further.</li> <li>• Participation in LA SEND Communication Review with Agent Marketing (Commissioned by LA).</li> <li>• Feedback on Wirral SEND Strategy and AP Strategy 2025-2029. 9 staff chosen for Varian DfE SEND survey</li> <li>• Feb 26 – Meeting with LA and 3 mainstream high schools relating to developing 'inclusive practice'.</li> </ul>	<p>Clearer school offer created on website and approved by Governors and LA.</p> <p>Director of Education very supportive.</p> <p>Feedback from training suggests staff more confident around inclusion messages (100% attending Nov 25 conference agreed it would positively impact on their practice).</p> <p>Positive feedback to training from SENCOs. 100 participants attended training.</p> <p>1 Secondary school currently keen to join Inclusive Schools Partnership proposal.</p> <p>Others requested training to boost expertise and parent confidence.</p> <p>Initial consultation on 141 potential requests resulted in 57 to be observed/placed.</p>
<p><b>2. Managing our building / environment.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Since moving into the new building in 2022, we have worked with the LA to negotiate a 'carve out' from the Pfl agreement. This should be completed by Summer 2026.</li> <li>• Wishlist of work to be undertaken before the building is handed back agreed.</li> <li>• Funding and agreement secured for £1.3 million 3G pitch to be built between March 2026 and Summer 2026.</li> <li>• Plans to expand car park – Summer 2026.</li> <li>• Plans to develop a community café – Summer 2026.</li> <li>• Plans to install a cycling storage shed to promote active travel and commuting (£10k grant secured) – Spring 2026.</li> <li>• Plans for immersive classroom – Spring 2026.</li> <li>• Plans to improve access to site (ongoing).</li> </ul>	<p>Dalkia/WSSL working collaboratively with LA and school to create lists of things 'to do' before handover.</p> <p>Dalkia/WSSL allowing essential work to start (e.g. bike shed, immersive classroom, security fencing).</p> <p>3G plans agreed.</p> <p>Awaiting timescales.</p> <p>Steering group needs establishing. Planning permission submitted for car park extension.</p> <p>Plans for Community Café need finalising. LA Lead moving role means Mark Bellamy/ Paul Smith need bringing up to speed. Capacity.</p>

<p><b>3. Adopting the new Ofsted Framework, especially focusing on our use of 'inclusive data.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Attend LA new Ofsted framework training (Nov/Dec 25).</li> <li>- Consult with Senior Leadership Team around SEF judgements on new Ofsted Framework.</li> <li>- Share new Framework focus areas with staff and pupils.</li> <li>- Present to Governors on the new Ofsted Framework and gain feedback on their SEF.</li> <li>- Workshop / consultation with Middle Leaders around leading change using the new framework.</li> </ul>	<p>Greater understanding amongst staff and governors of the new Ofsted Framework.  Greater engagement of staff in SEF,  Improved tracking of Inclusion on Arbor / Registers (e.g. PP column).  Use of Bounce Together to set pre and post intervention surveys and measure impact.  Better use of data tracking (see HOY models).</p>
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**Previous Inspection Details EIF 2019 onwards – Date: November 2021 – Outstanding judgement**

Judgements	Previous inspection outcome
Overall Effectiveness	Outstanding
Quality of Education	Outstanding
Personal Development	Outstanding
Behaviour and Attitudes	Outstanding
Leadership and Management	Outstanding
Sixth Form	Outstanding

**Previous Inspection Details Renewed Framework 2025 Onwards – Date:**

<b>Judgements</b>	<b>Previous inspection outcome</b>
Safeguarding	Met
Inclusion	Exceptional
Curriculum and Teaching	Strong with Exceptional Features. It will be Exceptional by end of 2026/2027 when we know pathways are embedded and we know they working to meet increased demand for qualifications created by increased numbers.
Achievement	Exceptional
Attendance and Behaviour	Attendance is Strong (as above national average for SEND) with Exceptional features. It will be Exceptional when Inclusive Attendance approach and EBSA strategy are fully embedded.  Behaviour is Exceptional
Personal Development and Wellbeing	Exceptional
Leadership and Governance	Exceptional
Sixth Form	Exceptional

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